

SERMO MIRABILIS:  
OR THE *1692*  
SILENT  
LANGUAGE.

WHEREBY

One may learn perfectly in the space of six hours, how  
to impart his mind to his Friend in any Language,  
*English, Latin, French, Dutch, &c.* tho never so  
deep and dangerous a Secret, without the least Noise,  
Word or Voice; and without the Knowledge of  
any in Company.

BEING

A wonderful Art kept secret for several Ages, in *Padua*,  
and now published only to the wise and prudent, who  
will not expose it, as a Prostitute, to every Foolish  
and Ignorant Fellow.

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By Monsieur *La Fin*, once Secretary to *His Excellence*,  
the Cardinal of *Richlieu*.

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*Hug. Grot. Secrecy is the Curtain of Parity.*  
*Jerulan. The best things abused become the basest.*

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Licensed and Entred according to Order.

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L O N D O N,  
Printed for *Tho. Salusbury* in *1st* street and  
sold by *Randal Taylor* near Stationer's  
Hall, 1692.



# SERMO MIRABILIS, OR THE SILENT LANGUAGE.

**A**S after the vulgar way of Communication, Men speak their minds by Word and Voice, so by this unknown and unusual way, men declare their Minds by motions, depending on a Natural Alphabet, as followeth.

The Vowels *A, E, I, O, U, Y*, are signified by the Thumb and Fingers, of the left hand; *A* the Thumb, *E* the first Finger, *I* the second Finger, *O* the third Finger, *U* the fourth or little Finger. And because there is no place for *Y* among the Fingers, it is set in the plain of *Mars* or hollow of the hand, as in the following Figure appeareth.

## The CONSONANTS.

**B** ——— Brow

**C** ——— Chetle

**D** ——— Deaf ear

**F** ——— Fore-head

**G** ——— Gullet

**H** ——— Hair

**I** ——— Eye

**K** ——— Knuckle

# Sermo Mirabilis, of

**L** — Lip

**M** — Mouth

**N** — Nose

**P** — Pap

**Q** — Quick Motion with any Finger

**R** — Rib

**S** — Shoulder

**T** — Temples

**V** — Vein in the Arm

**W** — Wrist

**X** — Two first Fingers a cross

**Z** — Breast, lower part

Now it is here to be observed that in the Alphabet, to make it the more natural and easy, every place of the body here mention'd beginneth with that Letter which it signifyeth or representeth. As *Forehead* beginneth with *F*, *Cheek* with *C*, &c. But there being no visible place of the Face and Body beginning with *D*, *Q*, *X* and *Z*, We have borrow'd the Representation of *D* from the incident Quality or rather Defect of the *Eare*, *Deafness*, which beginneth with *D*. *Q* from the Quick Motion of the Finger or Hand. *X* from its similitude, or any two Fingers a cross. *Z* is represented by the lower part of the Breast. Which all, by frequent use, will become as easy and ready as any other of the Letters represented more naturally.

Thus

Thus the 24 Letters are represented by twenty four parts of the Body and Face. And, as words are spoke with the Mouth, after the common way of expressing, so is the Mind here declared by Motions, as by pointing the first Finger of the right hand to that part or place which representeth the Letter aimed at. Thus the silent Speaker must spell every word alphabetically, to him or her who hath learned and knoweth the same, as well as himself, and after every word, for distinction sake, make a *Sign*, as by snapping with the middle Finger and Thumb of the right hand, or by some silent motion, as the stretching out of the Right hand, or any other observable *Sign* which both know and have agreed upon.

As if you were to call one *Rogue*, without the Knowledge of any in Company: First you must move your Finger to your *Ribs*, which represent *R*. Then to the ring *Finger* of your left hand, which representeth *O*. Then to your *Gullet*, which representeth *G*. Then to your *little Finger*, which representeth *V*. Then to your first *Finger*, which representeth *E*. Then, after the *Sign* given, all these Letters or Motions being observed, kept in Memory, and put together, by him to whom the Discourse is directed, make up *ROGUE*.

It was my business lately to teach the Latin Language to a Merchant's Son at his Father's House in *London*, where a young Gentleman came frequently to visit my Scholar, but intended to court the young Daughter, over whom the Parents kept so watchful an Eye, that the young Spark could find no opportunity to make his Address ; but being one day at Table, and observing her to speak to me, without opening her mouth, he pry'd further in the Art, and became my Scholar, for one day ; in which time, I taught him how to speak to her without the help of his Tongue, and to impart his Mind without the knowledg of her Parents. Thus,

First he moved his Finger

To his Mouth ————— M

Then to his Thumb ——— A

Then to his Ear ——— D

Then to his Thumb ——— A

Then to his Mouth ——— M

Then gave the Sign to signify that the word was ended, all which the Lady observing, knew that the word was *Madam*.

Then to his Eye ————— I

Then gave the Sign

Then to his Lip ——— L

Then to his ring Finger ——— O

Then to the Vein of his Arm V

Then to his first Finger ——— E

Then







Then gave the Sign.

Then to his Thumb——A

Then to his Ear———D

Then to his Mouth———M

Then to his middle Finger—I

Then to his Ribs———R

Then to his first Finger—E

Then gave the Sign.

Then to his Thumb———A

Then to his Nose———N

Then to his Ear———D

Then gave the Sign.

Then to his Thumb———A

Then to his Ear———D

Then to his Ring Finger—O

Then to his Ribs———R

Then to his first Finger—E

Then gave the Sign.

Then to the hollow of his hand Y

Then to his Ring Finger—O

Then to his Little Finger—U

All which observed and put together, make up, *Madam, I love, admire, and adore you.*

The Ladys silent Answer was modest, and accompanied with a Smile and Blush. But the young Gentleman, under pretence of perfecting him in his new Language, made bold sometimes to confer with the Lady, and at last, had the Liberty of a more frequent Converse, by the Parents Permission; till at last

he obtain'd her Affection, which did conclude in a happy Marriage.

I lately made a Wager with a Gentleman to tell him his *Thought*; he was resolute in the adventure and laid ten to one; therefore to prevent all ground of jealousy and suspicion, I desired him to go to the next Room and tell my Friend his *Thought*, which he did without hesitation. My Friend, by the help of this silent Language, imparted to me the Secret; which I, after a small pause, revealed publicly, at which the Gentleman being amazed, thinking that I had known the Secrets of his heart profer'd any reward whatsoever, for the knowledge of so deep a mystery; wherein he is now a good proficient.

I was sometime ago at a Tavern in London, with a Gentleman my intimate acquaintance, whom one in company intended to arrest; and to that intent, having acquainted me, sent a Porter for a *Serjeant* to the *Counter-gate*: but I, to save my Friend from trouble, desired him to be gone or go to Prison; whereupon he immediately took his leave, notwithstanding his Creditor pressed him to stay and drink the other Bottle, never suspecting me to have given him any caution to prevent the imminent danger. But all the old Usurer got by it was the *Serjeants* company, to drink a Bottle of Wine, and the paying 5 Shillings.

But

But tho this *Art*, in it self, be both lawful and profitable, yet is there none more lyable to abuse, by being perverted to bad and finistrous Ends; as chëating at *Cards*, and other Games, betraying and trapping men for private ends, sowing Dissention among Friends, &c.

I knew a witty and courageous Captain in *Flanders*, but of a vindictive Spirit, pretend great friendship to his Lieutenant, whom he mortally hated, and in token of his pretended respect, caused me to teach him this silent way of speaking; pretending thereby to entertain the more close and frequent correspondence with him, till at last he brought him to that height of Confidence, that at all times he spoke his mind of other Officers, without Fear or Discretion. The Captain finding the Spark so flexible, accused him to the Collonel as an abusive Fellow, that deserved not to keep company with civil Persons; much less to bear Commission among such worthy Gentlemen: And to prove his assertion sent for the Lieutenant, and (having obtained Liberty of the Collonel, to whom he had taught this silent Language) to iuduce the Spark, and free him from all distrust, spoke very carelessly of the Officers, and especially of the Collonel. The Lieutenant thinking all was safe, as under the covert of an unknown Tongue,

Tongue, spoke so disgracefully of the Collo-  
nel, that notwithstanding his conniving then,  
he sent him in a short time to Prison, took  
from him his Commission, and sent him  
home in Rags to his own Country.

*Of Contractions and Abbreviations.*

As in English print, one Character repre-  
senteth a Word of one Syllable, as *and* is  
figured by & : and as two Letters stand for a  
word of several Syllables, as *Dr.* for *Doctor*,  
*Mr.* for *Master*, &c. So may the same Me-  
thod be used by motions in this silent Lan-  
guage, in all words that more frequently oc-  
cur. Thus,

For *and* joyn both your hands together.

For *yes*, shut your right hand.

For *no*, shut your left hand.

For *Mr.* move first to your mouth, then  
to your ribs.

For *Dr.* move first to your Ear, then to  
your Ribs; and be mindful to give the Sign  
of Distinction after every word, whither con-  
tracted or spoke at length.

Thus this silent Language admitteth no less  
of Contractions and Abbreviations, by Mo-  
tions, than any other doth by Letters and Cha-  
racters, as the Speaker thinketh fit.

*Of Numeration.*

There is one way of Numeration used a-  
mong the *Gracians* which doth not exceed the  
Number

Number of 24, conform to the 24 Letters of their *Alphabet*, *Alpha* representing 1. *Beta* 2, &c. Which may be here used in this dumb Language: as the *Thumb* 1, the *Brow* 2, &c. But this cometh far short to the true measure of Numeration; therefore do represent the nine digit *Figures*, 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9. and the Cypher 0, by the Thumbs and Fingers of the Right and Left hands: As when I would mention 1, I demonstrate the Thumb of the Right hand, 2 the first Finger, 3 the middle Finger, 4 the Ring Finger, 5 the little Finger, 6 the Thumb of the Left hand, &c.

Now suppose you were to mention this present year 1692. First you must demonstrate, point out, or move the right

*Thumb to the left Arm* ——— 1

*Then the left Thumb to the right Arm* 6

*Then the Ring Finger of the left hand* 9

*Then the first Finger of the right hand* 2

Which, in all, make up 1692.

But if you be to express a Number bearing two or more Figures of one sort, as 11, 22, 33, &c. Then you must either demonstrate, or move the same Finger to the opposite Arm twice, or as oft as there are Figures to be expressed.

As for the number 11, you must move the right Thumb to the left Arm twice, for 12  
you

you must move the first Finger of the right hand to the left Arm twice, if the Number contain three figures of one sort as 333, then move the middle Finger of the right hand thrice, and so of all the Numbers of this kind.

Now to make merry one may desire any in Company to think on a Number, and tell it to his Friend; lest he forget or prevaricate, which he may wager to tell, without his information; he only to whom the Number is imparted giving a few private signs, according to the Rule above mentioned.

But if by frequent use, this way of speaking should turn common, and not safe to declare one's mind by; then let any two Letters of the Alphabet, especially the *Vowels*, or any two of the digit Figures be changed to other Motions; and that will secure the Speaker from the lash of a dangerous hearer or informer. As by changing *A* to the *Arm*, *E* to the *Elbow*, &c. And as for the Figures, they may be changed without trouble as the Speaker pleaseth. And if this way of Numeration prove difficult, let the Number be spell'd at length by Letters, and that is the surer way.

*Of the Latin Language.*

**A**S the same Letters which write or print *English*, will also write or print *French*, *Dutch*, or *Latin*. So by the preceeding Alphabet,  
you

you may expresse your mind whatever be the Language. But that they who are Masters of the Latin Tongue may have the advantage of those who are unlearned. I shall here set down an Alphabet, which dependeth only on Latin words, thus.

The Vowels A E I O U are the same with the English.

B	—	Brachium
C	—	Cubitus
D	—	Dentes
F	—	Frons
G	—	Gena
H	—	Humerus
I	—	Oculus dexter
L	—	Labium
M	—	Mentum
N	—	Nasus
P	—	Pectus
Q	—	Digitus motus celer
R	—	Reduvia
S	—	Supercilium sinistrum
T	—	Tempora
V	—	Venter
X	—	Indices transversi

Thus are the Latin Letters represented and (as in the English) you must move the first Finger of your right hand, to that place which representeth the Letter which doth fit your purpose. As for Example; put case yo

were at the Tavern, and had no Money about you, and intended to borrow a Crown or Noble of your Friend, without the Knowledge of any in Company, in these words, *Accommoda mihi Aureum.*

Move the first Finger of your right hand to  
The Thumb of the left hand—A

Then to your Elbow ——— C Cubitus

To your Elbow again ——— C Cubitus

Then to your Ring Finger — O

Then to your Chin ——— M Mentum

Then to your Ring Finger — O

Then to your Teeth ——— D Dentes

Then to your Thumb ——— A

Then give the sign and the word is *Accomoda.*

Then to your Chin ——— M Mentum

Then to your Middle Finger — I

Then to your Shoulder ——— H Humerus

Then to your Middle Finger — I

Then give the Sign and the word is *mihi.*

Then to your Thumb ——— A

Then to your little Finger — U

To the skin over your Nail — R Reduvia

Then to your first Finger — E

Then to your little Finger — U

Then to your Chin ——— M Mentum

And the Word is *Aureum.* Which all put together make up *Accommoda mihi Aureum;*

or



or, lend me a Crown. And by this Means, one may save his credit, and put his Friends kindness to a Tryal.

As for *Diphthongs*, they are little necessary to those who are Masters of the Latin Tongue, but the moving of two Fingers of the right hand to any two Vowels of the left maketh a *Diphthong*.

*As the Thumb and first Finger make* Æ

*The Ring and first Finger make* — OE

*The Thumb and little Finger make* — AU

*The first and little Finger make* — EU

*The first and middle Finger make* — EI

So that if you point once, these two Vowels or Fingers of your left hand, with the first and second Fingers of your Right, you signify two Vowels; and the Conjunction of two Vowels make a *Diphthong*.

Lately, being in Company, I laid a Wager with a Gentleman, to tell him any *Word* or *Sentence* he did impart to my Friend in *Latin*, without his Information, and my Friends *Word* or *Writing*. The Gentleman did conjecture, that I could know by Signs, something of his meaning; but could not know the individual *Word*: Therefore, being confident in his own Judgment, laid a wager of six bottles of *Canary*. The *Vintner* himself holding stakes. And so my Friend

First moved his Finger to his  
Teeth. — — — — — D Dentes

Then moved the first, and se-  
cond Fingers of his right hand, to  
the Thumb and first Finger of  
his left. — — — — — Æ

Then to his Chin. — — — — — M Mentum

Then to the ring Finger of his  
left hand. — — — — — O

Then to his Nose. — — — — — N Nasus

Which all put together, make up the word  
DÆMON, by which the young Spark swore,  
when he lost the Wager, which the *Visitner*,  
who held Stakes, was not backwards in  
bringing in.

## POSTSCRIPT.



**T**Hus have I said all that, at present, I intend on  
this Subject. I hope it will prove acceptable,  
especially to the more knowing and courteous, if not I  
shall be very sorry. However the price is small, and  
the time of perusing but short, and so both expence  
and loss will be but inconsiderable. I have laid a Foun-  
dation, whereon a more ingenious may build; and at  
first my intention only was

*Stamina prima jugo imponere, atque ut altera Virtus  
Inserat in medio Radiis sub tegmen acutis.*

**F I N I S.**

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